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Making you our priority

Our arrangements for providing Priority Services to those customers in our Priority Services Membership Club

Our arrangements for providing Priority Services

We are committed to providing the best possible service to our customers and we strive to go above and beyond the minimum standards for identifying and supporting vulnerable customers that are set out in this statement.

Priority Services Membership

We operate and maintain our Priority Services Membership, which covers a wide range of support needs, including, but not limited to; medical dependency on electricity; mobility needs; communication needs (including difficulties in communicating in English); other medical illnesses; the elderly and households with children under the age of 5.

Customers who require such additional support during a power cut can be included in our Priority Services Membership Club, free of charge. Some customers may have support requirements that they may only be applicable for a short time period and, as a result, are able to register for a period to suit their needs. This period is limited to a maximum of 18 months, at which point customers may re-join if they wish.

We are committed to contacting every member a minimum of once every two years and they will be sent a communication asking them if they wish to remain in the Priority Services Membership Club and be given the opportunity to refresh, update or remove their information.

We obtain priority services information and, therefore, identify customers who may benefit from being in our Priority Services Membership Club through our own, targeted recruitment campaigns, when we have the opportunity to speak with customers either face to face or on the telephone and from the energy suppliers.

We also partner with a number of other organisations (including other utilities and voluntary organisations and charity partners) to identify customers who could benefit from membership.

Customers who wish to sign up for Priority Services or a person acting on their behalf (where they have explicit consent to do so) can register directly via our website www.northernpowergrid.com/care or by calling our contact centre on 0800 169 2996

Information and advice provided PSR Customers

Priority Services members receive a Priority Services welcome information pack on registration, which provides essential information on what to do in a power cut, tailored support for different vulnerabilities, access to other services we offer, including alternative communication channels, and energy efficiency advice.

We provide appropriate communication updates to our Priority Services members to ensure we maintain our relationship, including winter preparedness, other weather-related events, information about new services and general communication updates.

In the event of a planned power cut, all Priority Services members will be contacted in advance by letter and either by telephone or in person by the project engineer or one of our Priority Services Team so that we can assess their needs and provide any additional support that may be required.

Our Priority Services Co-ordinators are responsible for notifying and maintain regular contact with Priority Services members impacted by an unplanned power cut to provide information, check on the Priority Services member's welfare and offer welfare assistance as required. Regular contact will be maintained at the frequency requested by the Priority Services members. All priority services are provided free of charge to the member.

We endeavour to proactively contact Priority Services members by phone with power cut updates between the hours of 7:00 am and 11:00 pm, seven days a week. However, we can also phone Priority Services members during the night (i.e. between 11:00 pm and 7:00 am, seven days a week), if they wish. Priority Services members wishing to receive this service may do so by contacting our Priority Services Team on 0800 169 2669.

We offer a range of communication channels for those customers with additional communication needs.

We review our Priority Services communications and services annually to ensure that they meet the needs of our Priority Services members and reflect, where possible, feedback received from those customers and other key stakeholders.

Sharing our priority service records with the relevant Supplier and Relevant Gas Transporter

We and our partners are committed to meeting our obligations under data protection legislation and ensuring that all customers' personal data is handled and stored securely. Consequently, we have policies and procedures in place, which support that compliance.

We share priority service records with the relevant energy supplier or gas transporter either through the electricity industry's secure data transfer network or via an encrypted spread sheet unless the customer explicitly tells us not to do so. Please see our Privacy Policy at www.northernpowergird.com for more information about how we process personal data.

Password scheme and support services for customers with additional communication needs

Priority Services members can ask to be part of our password scheme to help them feel safe and comfortable when someone visits their home on our behalf by calling 0800 1692996. However, we do advise Priority Services members not to let anyone into their home if they doubt that the caller is genuine.

Priority Services members' passwords are held within our Customer Relationship Management system which is accessible to all of our colleagues and contractors working on our behalf who may be required to visit Priority Services members at their home. We also have a code of practice on visiting customers at their home, of which all of our employees and contractors are aware.

All customers can contact us by telephone, email, letter or in person at one of our offices should they require more information or to complain about a service that they have received.

We also offer multiple communication channels for those customers who are hard of hearing or visually impaired or where English is not their first language. These services are free of charge and are detailed in our communication materials. Alternative channels of communication include:

- BSL live interpreter;
- Text phone;
- Text relay;
- Language line;
- Braille/large print; and
- Recite-me - web accessibility, languages, size, colours, speaking and underlining.

The current version of this statement is always available to download from our website www.northernpowergird.com and is also available in alternative formats (including as a hard copy) for those customers who are hard of hearing or are visually impaired or whose first language is not English. Please call us on 0800 169 2669 if you would like a copy of this statement in one of those alternative formats.

This statement is prepared in accordance with Paragraph 10.12 of Standard Licence Condition 10 of our electricity distribution licence.